1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

kilometre in Ḥilla liwā, 46 in Karbalā, 40 in Baghdad, followed by Baṣra, Muntafiq, and Sulaymaniya. In all parts, various as they were in scene and tradition, the manner of life imposed for centuries by the local environment, resources, and social groupings remained, at first glance, substantially unchanged. The following pages will offer results of a closer look at the 'Iraq society of the mid-century.

Towards the evolution of a less heterogeneous, less unmanageable public than that of 1900 there had been in fifty years some progress, but the transformation was clearly incomplete. The distinction of Sunni and Shi'i remained not only doctrinally but socially and politically recognizable. It was true that in Government service and the professions little discrimination remained, in commerce the Shi'is had gone far to occupy the empty places of the Jews, and Mujtahid influence was much diminished; nevertheless, the old sectarian division was still a persistent element of disunity, and Shi'ism which could be used as the basis for political grouping would as such doubtless evoke a Sunni reaction. A politically conscious Islamic revival—a movement never without its appeal, as the Ikhwan al-Muslimin were showing in Egypt—gave no sign of developing in 'Iraq; orthodox religion had lost much of its hold on 'enlightened' youth, education was almost wholly secular, and Islamic faith and observance grew ever rarer save among women and the elderly. If Islam, therefore, had been little used as a weapon of xenophobia, yet Shi'i claims and grievances could still inflame, the element of fanaticism still lurked, and the Shi'i tribes were still capable of following, if less readily and blindly than of old, the reactionary guidance of the Holy Cities.

Of the persistent minorities—religious, national, and racial—within the population, much has been said on other pages. The resident Persians still formed a powerless but a sensitive and embarrassing body, watched jealously from Teheran. The Turkoman villagers of Kirkuk liwā were increasingly but not yet wholly assimilated; they kept their dour character and their Turkish speech. The Yazidis were still forced by their creed and character into a social isolation uneasy but no longer formidable. The Assyrians now settled, it could be hoped, as a tolerant and tolerated 'Iraqi minority, were still unassimilable and retained qualities and influences which precluded full confidence in a trouble-free future. The other Christian communities had changed little in their outlook, organization, or place in local society. Of the Jews, seven-eighths had left 'Iraq for ever, and of the remainder, which included highly-placed citizens, it was doubtful whether their future would be one of hostile Muslim pressure or of re-established security. Of the greatest of 'Iraqi minorities, the Kurds, enough

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
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(c) *Jews*

Until recently Iraq contained a large community of Jews whose families had been settled in the country for hundreds or even thousands of years. They lived mostly in the large towns, especially Baghdad, in whose economic life they played an important part as merchants, financiers, manufacturers, and members of the professions. There were also Kurdish-speaking Jews in the north, mostly urban traders and craftsmen but also rural cultivators. A law of 1931 gave Jewish communities self-government in their own affairs, and there was a highly organized communal life, with schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions. In consequence of events in Palestine the majority of Jews left Iraq in 1950–1, mostly for Israel.

(d) *Yazidis*

These are vulgarly known as 'devil-worshippers' but, although their religion includes the propitiation of Satan, it might more justly be described as an amalgam of Christian, Muslim, and Magian elements. They are divided between Jebel Sinjar and the Shaikhan district north of Mosul, speak a Kurdish dialect, except in their rites, where Arabic is used, and are probably of Kurdish origin.

(e) *Sabians*

('Baptists'), also called the Mandaeans and the 'Christians of St John'; their religion combines elements of various origins and periods. Most of them are craftsmen—especially silversmiths—in the large towns.

(f) *Shabak*

Of Kurdish origin, who live in the area of the Yazidis and are not clearly distinguished from them; their religion contains Yazidi and extreme Shii elements.

(g) *Other Sects*

Include Bahais, Sarlis, Kakais, Qizilbashis, none of them of any political significance.

Political History

Written history began in Iraq at the end of the fourth millennium B.C., but archaeological remains from much earlier periods, first in the north and later also in the south, give evidence of palaeolithic man, of agricultural neolithic man and, from the sixth and fifth millennia, of increasing human progress expressed successively in extensive agriculture, copper